

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Initially, Applicants would like to express their appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided.

Applicant also acknowledges with appreciation the indication that claims 15 and 28 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim (*see* paragraph 4 on page 7 of the Official Action).

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1 and 2 will have been amended and claims 15, 28 and 37-39 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1-14, 16-27 and 29-36 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejection, and allowance of all the claims pending in the present application.

In the Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-14, 16-27 and 29-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over CASANOVA (U.S. Patent No. 6,364,115) in view of CERNY (U.S. Patent No. 4,860,89).

Without acquiescing to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, Applicants have incorporated the features of claims 15 and 28 (*which the Examiner has indicated as containing allowable subject matter*) into independent claims 1 and 2, respectively; and have canceled claims 37-39.

Thus, Applicants submit that claims 1-14, 16-27 and 29-36 have been placed in allowable form; therefore, Applicants submit that it is not necessary to discuss the appropriateness of the rejection.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request an early indication of the allowance of all of the pending claims.

Further, Applicants expressly reserve the right to submit claims of a related scope in another application. Thus, the cancellation of claims 15, 28, and 37-39 is without prejudice.

In view of the amendments and remarks herein, Applicants submit that independent claims 1 and 2 are in condition for allowance. With regard to dependent claims 3-14, 16-27 and 29-36, Applicants assert that these claims are allowable on their own merit, as well as because of their respective dependencies from claims 1 and 2, which have been amended to incorporate the features of previously pending claims 15 and 28 (which the Examiner has indicated as containing allowable subject matter), respectively.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims in the present application are clearly patentable over the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, and an indication to such effect is respectfully requested, in due course.

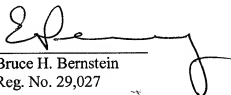
SUMMARY

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests an indication to that effect. Applicants have argued the allowability of the claims. Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate.

Applicant notes that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance and should not be considered as surrendering equivalents of the territory between the claims prior to the present amendment and the amended claims. Further, no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection is made by the present amendment. All other amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Kenichi NAKATSU et al.



Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

April 10, 2008
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1941 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191

Enoch E. Peavey
Reg. No. 57,686